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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Advisement Intervention System at East Central Community College (ECCC) in Decatur, Mississippi, recognized by the Small/Rural Community College Commission as an "exemplary program." The paper also provides suggestions for revising or developing an advising program. Many advising programs are not adequate because their function is consumer-oriented but their environments are dominated by traditionalist attitudes. The advisement program at ECCC underwent changes from traditionalist to consumerist orientation to adequately meet the needs of and to become accountable to the 1,400 students it serves. The program involved five advisement intervention meetings scheduled throughout the year to address specific content and purposes. A graduation transfer checklist was developed to actively involve students in tracking their academic progress, particularly the required core courses taken in order to graduate. In addition, an academic advising evaluation procedure and an effective advisor assignment method were developed. A beter communication network was implemented, including early alert absentee notifications and academic progress mailings for students experiencing problems in these areas. Students are required to complete an advisement checklist to identify problems or potential problems related to academics. An adviser sheet was also developed to promote goal setting, which fosters discussion between student and advisor. The appendices include the forms used to implement the advisement program. (LP)

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Advisement Intervention: A Key Strategy for a New Age -- Student Consumerism

By
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B.S., University of Mississippi, 1980
M. Ed., University of Mississippi, 1982
Ed. D., University of Mississippi, 1991

A Presentation
Given at the 1991 Annual Convention of the
National Rural Education Association
held in Jackson, Mississippi
on October 10-14

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ABSTRACT

Advisement Intervention/A Key Strategy for a New Age -- Student Consumerism.

The presentation will address the rural college environmental transition from "traditionalism" to "consumerism" as it relates to proactive advisement intervention.

The presentation will address the framework for an Advisement Intervention System. The content will include program development, advisor selection, routine advisor meetings, content covered in advisor meetings, absentee/academic progress "early alert system," communications network, and a formula for success.

The information provided above describes the Advisement Intervention System at East Central Community College. The system is recognized by the Small/Rural Community College Commission as an "Exemplary Program."

The objective of this presentation is to offer practical advice to College Advising Coordinators attempting to develop a program.

Presentation

Advisement Intervention: A Key Strategy for a New Age -- Student Consumerism.

This presentation provides practical approaches for Academic Advising coordinators charged with revising or developing an advising program. First, consider this humorous story containing three moral principles to be kept in mind when developing an advising program.

A Soviet professor leaves his office at the University of Moscow one afternoon for his daily walk. He discovers a small bird on the roadside that is freezing to death. He picks it up and places it underneath his coat and shirt in an effort to save its life and continues walking down the road. Several minutes later the bird thaws and begins squirming. As this is quiet uncomfortable, the professor seeks a new solution to the problem. Aha!! He observes a fresh pile of steaming warm cow manure in a nearby pasture. He stuffs the bird in this waste up to its neck and continues his walk. Consequently, the bird gains enough strength to lift itself out of the manure and

begins whistling. A fox hears the commotion, rushes over, and eats the bird.

The most obvious lesson here is simple. When charged with developing an Advisement Program within most traditionally oriented college environments, one may feel as though he/she has been stuffed in manure up to the neck. Despite this sensation, remember these three principles:

1. Those characters within your institution that stuff you with the responsibility of coordinating a successful advising program may not be your enemies.
2. Those characters within your institution offering to lift you from the smelly advising burden may not be your allies.
3. When you do feel strong enough about your advising program to whistle ---- it may not be a good idea.

Good idea or not, I'm going to whistle today about some of the problems we currently face in advising and some of the successes we have experienced at my institution (East Central Community College).

Boyer (1987) is quoted as follows from his best selling book College, The Undergraduate Experience in America.

> The successful college offers a well-planned program of advising for all students. This is the goal, and yet we found advising to be one of the weakest links in the undergraduate experience. Only about 1/3 of the colleges in our study had a quality advisement program that helped students think carefully about their "academic options."

Wes Habley (1988) edited the book The Status and Future of Academic Advising. He claims generally that academic advising has been and still is perceived by administration as a low-status function. He believes the most significant areas where advising can be improved are organization and administration. Habley says "Training, accountability, evaluation, and recognition/reward are the cornerstones of performance in every field or job. Yet, those cornerstones continue to be stumbling blocks in most advising programs."

I believe effective advising programs stumble because their function is consumer oriented and their environments are dominated by "traditionalist" attitudes.

This area needs our attention and it will be necessary for us to give it for any success as we enter a "New Age" in rural higher education. In this "New Age" we move from "Traditionalism" to "Consumerism" in the way we treat students. The following key points contrast the elements present within each environment.

	TRADITIONALISM		CONSUMERISM
1.	access (available)	vs	active advertising
2.	measure resources	vs	measure outcomes
3.	focus on needs of institution	vs	focus on needs of students
4.	student employee (works for institution)	vs	student consumer (institution works for student)
5.	advising responsibility is unclear ---- student? counselor? faculty?	vs	advising responsibility clear ---- the institution is responsible to set standards that hold all three accountable.

These contrasting environments reveal the necessity for why Advisement Intervention's moving from a low to high status position on many college campuses as institutions move from "Traditionalism" to "Consumerism."

A classic example of a move in this direction is seen in the Advisement Intervention system developed over a five year period at East Central Community College (ECCC). During this period, the environment at ECCC evolved from a strong "traditionalist" to "consumerist" orientation. The resulting product has been recognized by the Small/Rural Community Colleges Commission as an exemplary intervention system. The program provides one full-time academic advisor, two full-time vocational-technical advisors, and fifty-four faculty advisors who serve approximately 1,400 students.

Our institution believes the following statements describe what must occur to effect change in an advisement system.

1. College advisors must believe that their current system is not working. The situation must be disturbing.
2. They must accept personal responsibility for the system's inadequacies and for creating

solutions.

3. They must gain the support of the college president and significant other faculty and administration leaders. Expect considerable resistance.
4. They must involve those who will be advising in program planning.
5. They must demonstrate a relationship between advisement/ intervention and recruiting/retention outcomes.

Five years ago we began to change ECCC's advising program. We identified the following problems and responded to them.

1. We believed too many poorly planned group meetings were required. We reduced to five per year and specified content to be covered (see Appendix A).
2. We had poor participation at our scheduled group meetings ---- 30% or less. We believed a better communication network was needed. As a result, we developed flyers and posted them around campus; a special note was included in our daily student bulletin; faculty members alerted students of the meeting during classes; and a statement was

automatically printed on students' class schedules alerting them of advisor meetings. We now average 70% or greater attendance. Remember these meetings are not mandatory.

3. Students often took courses not required in their major and often lacked core courses required to graduate. Therefore, we developed a graduation transfer checklist that actively involved students in tracking their academic progress (see Appendix B). According to our retiring Academic Dean, not one student who applied for graduation in Spring 1991 lacked courses necessary to graduate.
4. Our program provided little advisor training and lacked accountability. Based on materials created by the American College Testing Program, we responded to this by developing an evaluation procedure and conducting annual workshops (see Appendix C).
5. We were assigning students to faculty advisors based on two criteria:
   A. The student had to be enrolled in at least one class taught by the scheduled advisor.

B. The students major had to be within the department of the assigned advisor. We have three broad departments ---- Math/Science, Social Sciences/Education/Business, and Humanities/Fine Arts. We believe this system required the advisor to track an unreasonable number of specific majors.

Now advisor assignments are based on specific major. For example, two faculty advisors advise all elementary education majors, another advises all secondary education majors, another all nursing majors, etc.

6. We needed a better communication network in our effort to combat attrition. Based on the Miami Dade Success Story involving their computerized advising network, we implemented two strategies. The first involves an early alert absentee notification (see Appendix D). The second is an academic progress mailing (see Appendix E).

7. We believed our advisement system was passive. We became more assertive. Students are now required to complete an Advisement

Checklist during the September general session advisement meeting (see Appendix F). The completed sheets are returned to my office. Students are then contacted and counseled related to the areas marked.

8. We developed a more responsive advisee sheet to help foster interpersonal relationships between advisor and student (see Appendix G). The goal setting area of the sheet specifically requires each student who enrolls at East Central to establish goals. These goals are evaluated and discussed during scheduled advisor meetings.

I have enjoyed sharing with you some of the activities that are taking place on ECCC's campus, and trust you have been able to pick up an idea or two that can help you with your program. Does anyone have questions?

Selected Bibliography

Selected Bibliography

Boyer, Ernest L. (1987). The undergraduate experience in America. New York: Harper & Row.

Habley, W. R. (Ed.) (1988). The status and future of academic advising. Iowa City, Iowa: ACT Publications.

Appendixes

Appendix A
Advisement Intervention Schedule

ADVISEMENT INTERVENTION SCHEDULE

I. GENERAL MEETING

DATE: Early - September
PURPOSE: 1. Orientation
2. Have advisees complete Advisement Checklist
TOPIC: Discuss "Checklist of Things to Cover." (Section I of this notebook).
TYPE: Group session - 45 minutes

II. FALL MID-TERM MEETING

DATE: Mid - October
PURPOSE: 1. Distribute mid-term grades
2. Have advisees record grades on Transfer Checklist
TOPIC: Discuss grades, career choice, etc.
TYPE: Group session - 45 minutes

III. FALL ADVANCE REGISTRATION MEETING

DATE: November/December - two week period
PURPOSE: Class scheduling
TOPIC: Discuss course selection, goal setting, etc.
TYPE: Individual sessions - 15 minutes

IV. SPRING MID-TERM MEETING

DATE: Mid - March
PURPOSE: 1. Distribute mid-term grades
2. Have advisees complete Advisement Checklist
3. Have advisees record grades on Transfer Checklist
TOPIC: Discuss grades, career choice, etc.
TYPE: Group session - 45 minutes

V. SPRING ADVANCE REGISTRATION MEETING

DATE: April/May - two week period
PURPOSE: Class scheduling
TOPIC: Discuss course selection, goal setting, etc.
TYPE: Individual sessions - 15 minutes

Appendix B
Graduation Transfer Checklist for Academic Students

MAJOR _____ ADVISOR _____ DATE _____ UNIVERSITY TRANSFER _____

GRADUATION TRANSFER CHECKLIST FOR ACADEMIC STUDENTS

Sixty-four credit hours and a 2.00 G.P.A. are required for graduation.
1. Twenty-four of the 64 hours must be core hours.
2. Only 4 activity hours may count toward graduation.

CORE COURSES: The following core courses are required for graduation.

HRS	COURSE NAME	MID	FINAL	HRS	COURSE NAME	MID	FINAL
3	1113 English Comp. I			3	1313 College Algebra		
3	1123 English Comp. II						
	NOTE: Must select 6-8 hours of Laboratory Science Core.						
4	2514 Anat. & Phy. I			4	2424 Org. Chem. I		
4	2524 Anat. & Phy. II			4	2434 Org. Chem. II		
4	1224 Zoology I			4	2924 Microbiology		
4	2424 Zoology II			3	2313 Surv. of Gen. Physics I		
4	1134 Gen. Biology I						
4	1144 Gen. Biology II			4	2514 Gen. Physics I-A		
4	1214 Gen. Chem. I			3	2323 Surv. of Gen. Physics II		
4	1224 Gen. Chem. II						
4	2414 Gen. Physics I			4	2524 Gen. Physics II-A		
4	2424 Gen. Physics II						
	NOTE: Must select 6 hours of Humanities Core.						
3	2323 English Lit. I			3	1113 World Civ. I		
3	2333 English Lit. II			3	1123 World Civ. II		
3	2223 American Lit. I			3	2213 American His. I		
3	2233 American Lit. II			3	2223 American His. II		
	NOTE: Must select 3 hours of Fine Arts Core.						
3	1113 Art Appreciation			3	1113 Music Apprec.		

TOTAL HOURS CORE _____

REQUIRED COURSE: The following course is required for graduation.

HRS	COURSE NAME	MID	FINAL
3	1113 Oral Communication		

ACTIVITY COURSES: Only 4 activity hours may count toward graduation.

HRS	COURSE NAME	MID	FINAL	HRS	COURSE NAME	MID	FINAL
1	1211 Mix Choir I			1	1141 Modeling		
1	1221 Mix Choir II			1	1241 Drama Pro. I		
1	2211 Mix Choir III			1	1251 Drama Pro. II		
1	2221 Mix Choir IV			1	2241 Drama Pro. III		
1	1111 Col. Band I			1	2251 Drama Pro. IV		
1	1121 Col. Band II			1	2551 Fit. & Cond.		
1	2111 Col. Band III			1	2561 Fit. & Cond.		
1	2121 Col. Band IV			1	1131 Var. Sports		
1	1171 Stage Band I			1	1141 Var. Sports		
1	1181 Stage Band II			1	2131 Var. Sports		
1	1141 Collegians I			1	2141 Var. Sports		
1	1151 Collegians II			1	2531 Ind. & Dual Sp.		
1	2141 Collegians III			1	2541 Ind. & Dual Sp.		
1	2151 Collegians IV			1	1551 Weight Training		
1	1111 Col. Pub. I			1	1561 Weight Training		
1	1121 Col. Pub. II						
1	2111 Col. Pub. III						
1	2121 Col. Pub. IV						

TOTAL HOURS ACTIVITIES _____

BASIC STUDIES: Basic study hours will count toward graduation but will not transfer. Library Science and Improvement of Study are possible exceptions.

HRS	COURSE NAME	MID	FINAL	HRS	COURSE NAME	MID	FINAL
3	1103 Dev. English I			3	1233 Inter. Algebra		
3	1203 Dev. English II			3	1111 Library Science		
3	1203 Dev. Algebra			3	1411 Imp. of Study		

TOTAL HOURS BASIC STUDIES _____ _____

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Appendix C
Evaluation of Academic Advising

Evaluation of Academic Advising

East Central Community College

_____

Date

Circle the name of your current academic advisor.

Mr. Barrier	Mr. Joe Clark	Dr. Haggard	Ms. McMullan
Mr. Bradshaw	Mr. Davis	Dr. Harris	Mr. Pace
Mr. Bullock	Mr. Deaton	Mr. Hinson	Ms. Pace
Ms. Carroll	Dr. Ethridge	Ms. Holt	Ms. Pouncey
Mr. Carson	Dr. Fisher	Dr. Jefcoat	Mr. Thrash
Mr. Cooper	Ms. Glaze	Ms. Lee	Mr. Vickers
Mr. Jamie Clark	Mr. Guraedy	Mr. Mason	Ms. Vickers
			Ms. Wood

Circle the number that best indicates your evaluative assessment for each of the items listed for the individual whose name you circled above.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Knows who I am.....	5	4	3	2	1
2.	Is a good listener.....	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Expresses interest in me as a unique individual....	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Is available when I need assistance.....	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Checks to make sure we understand each other.....	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Provides me with accurate information about requirements, prerequisites, etc.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Keeps me up to date on changes in academic requirements.....	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Refers me to other sources from which I can obtain assistance.....	5	4	3	2	1
9.	Encourages me to assume an active roll in planning my academic program.....	5	4	3	2	1
10.	Helps me to identify the obstacles I need to overcome to reach my educational goals.....	5	4	3	2	1
11.	Takes the initiative in arranging meetings with me	5	4	3	2	1
12.	Is on time for appointments with me.....	5	4	3	2	1
13.	Clearly defines advisor/ advisee responsibility...	5	4	3	2	1
14.	Allows sufficient time to discuss issues or problems	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Helps me select courses that match my interests and abilities.....	5	4	3	2	1
16.	Is familiar with my academic background.....	5	4	3	2	1
17.	Encourages me to talk about myself and my college experience.....	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Encourages my interest in an academic discipline...	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Encourages my involvement in extracurricular activities.....	5	4	3	2	1
20.	Helps me explore careers in field of interest.....	5	4	3	2	1
21.	Is knowledgeable about courses outside my major area of study.....	5	4	3	2	1
22.	Seems to enjoy advising..	5	4	3	2	1
23.	Is approachable and easy to talk to.....	5	4	3	2	1
24.	Shows concern for my personal growth and development.....	5	4	3	2	1
25.	Is a helpful, effective advisor whom I would recommend to other students.	5	4	3	2	1

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

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Appendix D
Early Alert Absentee Letter

East Central Community College
Decatur, MS 39327

October 9, 1991

Dear Student:

East Central is pleased to have you as a student. One of our goals is to provide you with information which will help you succeed at EC. The information provided in this letter is about your class attendance, and we want you to use the information in checking your progress.

Our records show that you have missed classes in at least one of your courses (see list below). East Central's reporting system for absences includes all absences, both official and unofficial. Therefore, when you review your absences, consider the type.

The right to make up work for official absences is automatic; however, you must meet with your instructor on unofficial absences and provide valid reasons for having been absent. You must have the approval of the instructor to take makeup tests or to complete assignments for unofficial absences.

	Class	Total Absences	Unofficial	Official
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.	SPT 2247	2		2
6.	ENG 2059	3		3
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

We hope you find this information helpful. Please remember that too many unofficial absences will cut you out of the class with a failing grade.Your success at East Central is important to us.

Sincerely yours,

H. Greggory Jefcoat, Ed. D.
Academic Counselor

Appendix E
Early Alert Academic Progress Letter

East Central Community College
Decatur, MS 39327

September 27, 1991

It is good to have you as a student at East Central Community College. We hope the information contained in this letter will help you successfully complete your courses and motivate you to reach your academic goals.

To date we have received information that your academic progress needs improvement in the section(s) listed below. Please discuss your course progress with your instructor.

Academic progress needs improvement in section(s):

1. PSY 2745
2. BIO 4449
3. BIO 4475
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

We hope you find this information helpful and we wish you success at East Central. Please make an appointment with your faculty advisor or contact the Student Services Department - phone 635-2111, Ext. 231 for further information.

Sincerely yours,

H. Greggory Jefcoat, Ed. D.
Academic Counselor

GJ:ts

Appendix F
Advisement Checklist

NAME: _____ SOCIAL SECURITY #: _____

EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
635-2111, Ext. 231

ADVISEMENT CHECKLIST

PLEASE CHECK AS MANY OF THE FOLLOWING AS APPLY TO YOU:

Have poor study habits?	_____Improvement of Study
Have poor time management?	_____Improvement of Study
Have difficulty taking tests?	_____Improvement of Study
Have difficulty taking notes?	_____Improvement of Study
Are unsure of academic and/or career goals?	_____Counseling
Are disappointed by college or college life?	_____Counseling
Are having trouble with family and friends?	_____Counseling
Your job is interfering with schoolwork?	_____Counseling
Are having financial difficulty?	_____Counseling
Are taking too many courses?	_____Faculty Advisor
Are having trouble adjusting to school life?	_____Counseling
Believe that you did not receive the correct grade or there is some paperwork problem?	_____Faculty Member; Office of Admissions & Records
Other (Please list)_____	_____Check with counselor for referral
_____	
_____	

Referral Locations:

Counseling: Mr. Jimmy Dempsey, Vocational-Technical Counselor, Vo-Tech Bldg.
Dr. Gregg Jefcoat, Academic Counselor, Student Services Bldg.
Ms. Lynn Scribner, Vocational-Technical Counselor, Vo-Tech Bldg.

Improvement of Study: Mrs. Ann Burkes, Burton Library

Admissions & Records: Mr. Raymond McMullan, Student Services Building

Appendix G
Advisee Sheet

Please print: ADVISEE SHEET Code_____

NAME_____Social Security #_____

HIGH SCHOOL_____Major_____

Please list ACT scores as accurately as possible or verify second statement.

ACT: E_____ M_____ R_____ S_____ C_____
Has not been taken:_____

Please list high school grades as accurately as possible (put an X by courses not taken):

English 9th____ English 10th____ English 11th____ English 12th____
Algebra I ____ Algebra II ____ Trigonometry____

Please circle or list appropriate response:

I plan to transfer to a university after leaving ECCC: YES NO
If yes, where?_____
I have successfully completed a college algebra: YES NO
I am currently enrolled in a college algebra: YES NO
I have successfully completed English Composition: YES NO
I am currently enrolled in English Composition: YES NO
I am a current or former ECCC student: YES NO
If yes, what year did you attend?_____ Maiden Name_____
List one high school organization you participated in:_____
List your favorite academic subject:_____
List one interesting place you have traveled:_____
List your favorite hobby:_____

Goal Setting:

What is your purpose for enrolling?_____

Who do you want to become?_____

What skills do you want to develop?_____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY/VERIFICATION

ACT: E_____ M_____ R_____ S_____ C_____

Eng. 9th_____ Eng. 10th_____ Eng. 11th_____ Eng. 12th_____
Algebra I_____ Algebra II_____ Trigonometry_____

College Algebra_____ English Composition_____

PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

___English Composition
___College Algebra
___Honors English
___Honors History
___Honors American National Govt.
___Career Exploration

PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

English Requirements:
___Dev. Eng. I - Reading
___Dev. Eng. II - Composition
___Improvement of Study
___Library Science

Mathematics Requirements:
___Developmental Algebra
___Intermediate Algebra